

*Stour — water*

# Stourport Urban District Council.

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# ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH . . .

. . . For the Year 1900,

Presented to Council Meeting held April 3rd, 1901.

GENTLEMEN,—



THE Stourport Urban Sanitary District comprises the Parishes of Upper Mitton and Lower Mitton, Upper Mitton having been added in 1897; previous to 1897 Upper Mitton was part of the Droitwich Rural Sanitary District.

The area of Lower Mitton is 829 acres, of Upper Mitton 336 acres, a total area of 1165 acres.

The district overlies the new red sandstone, the subsoil being very porous, sand and gravel.

It is bounded by the Droitwich, Martley, and Kidderminster Rural Sanitary Districts, the River Severn separating it from the Martley District, the River Stour from the Droitwich District.

From Newtown and Burlish there is a gradual descent to the Rivers Severn and Stour, the land adjacent to the Rivers being liable to floods. That part of the district known as Baldwin Road, Mill Road, and Summerfield Road has water within 3 or 4 feet of the surface for most of the year, and the cellars in Summerfield Road often have subsoil water in them.

Lower Mitton includes the old town of Stourport, its shops and factories, and  $764\frac{1}{2}$  acres of farm land.

Upper Mitton includes the old hamlet of Upper Mitton, and Newtown which is composed almost entirely of artisan dwellings erected within the last 30 years.

Lower Mitton is in the Kidderminster Union and Registration District. Upper Mitton remains as before 1897, in the Droitwich Union and Registration District. The Registrar lives at Ombersley, 6 miles away, and attends in the district only once a week. It would be more convenient for the inhabitants if the parish were transferred to the Kidderminster Union, but the transfer is strongly opposed by the Ratepayers, chiefly landlords, because the rates of the Kidderminster are higher than those of the Droitwich Union.

Local Industries include an Iron Foundry, Carpet Factory, Tin Stamping Works, and a Vinegar Brewery, also Maltings. The water traffic is considerable as the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal here joins the Severn, and gives employment to a large number of persons. There are 1026 acres of farm land. The number of inhabited houses is 1006. The average wage is fairly high, and there is remarkably little poverty in the district.

The population of the district estimated to the middle of the year is 5488.

This estimate is based on the increase of population between the censuses of 1881 and 1891.

Lower Mitton, 81—	3358.	91—	3504.	Increase	146
Upper Mitton, 81—	833.	91—	1361.	"	528
	4191		4865		674

This rate of growth has been fairly maintained in Lower Mitton but not in Upper Mitton, and when the census of 1901 is taken the estimate of the population will probably prove excessive. If this be so the estimated rates for the last few years have been too low and this is just what might be expected for the rates of the last few years have been extraordinary low.

122 births—66 male, 56 female, have been registered.  
Birth rate 22.2.

This is still lower than last year's rate, which was the lowest for the last 10 years.

The average rates for the preceding 3 years were for

Stourport	...	23·2.
Worcestershire	...	27·6.
England and Wales		29·2.

56 deaths—29 male, 27 female, were registered. Death rate 10·2. 5 persons belonging to the district died outside it, the corrected death rate is therefore 11·1. This is slightly higher than last year's rate—10·3—but still very low.

The average rates for the preceding 3 years were for

Stourport	...	11·1.
Worcestershire	...	14·5.
England and Wales		17·7.

The use of such terms as Brain Lesion, Struma and Wasting, Abdominal Tumour, and Artificial Feeding, on Death Certificates is undesirable, it is impossible to classify properly such indefinite causes of death.

*Infant Mortality.* 12 children died under the age of one year which gives a rate of 98 per thousand births registered. This is the lowest rate since 1894 and lower far than the average for the 3 preceding years :—

Stourport	...	130.
Worcestershire	...	139.
England and Wales		160.

*Notifiable Disease.* 21 cases were notified—Scarlet Fever 17 cases, deaths *nil*. The disease was generally of a mild type and never became epidemic. 11 cases were removed to hospital. Erysipelas 2 cases, no deaths. Puerperal Fever 2 cases, 1 death. No case of this disease had previously been notified for more than 10 years.

The arrangement with the Kidderminster Corporation for treating our cases of Scarlet Fever and Smallpox at their hospital continues in force to the mutual advantage of each Sanitary Authority. A disinfector for infected clothes and bedding is now in operation at the hospital.

In January the opening of the parish Schools was postponed for a week on account of the Influenza epidemic, and in April they were again closed because of a very extensive epidemic of German Measles.

*Influenza* was epidemic in January, February, and March, the type being less severe than that of the previous year. Isolation was not generally carried out, sometimes it was impossible, more usually it was neglected. In consequence the number attacked was larger than it need have been. Complications were frequent and 3 deaths occurred.

*Measles* was epidemic in November and December but not extensively, so the Schools were not closed. Fortunately the weather was mild, complications were few and no death occurred.

*Whooping Cough* in a mild form was epidemic in December, but up to the end of the year the cases were few and no death occurred.

*Phthisis or Consumption.* The district has with one exception the highest death rate of any in the County from this disease. Until steps are taken to remedy existing insanitary conditions which diminish vitality and so tend to favour attack we must not expect to improve in this respect. 4 deaths occurred from this disease.

*Diarrhoea, Sore Throats and kindred diseases* which were common during the warm months of the year may also be attributed to insanitary conditions.

The district has been systematically inspected and many sanitary defects noted and remedied, others have been reported to the Council, without—as yet—result. Much sanitary work not urgently necessary has been postponed from year to year until the decision of the Council as to a sewage scheme.

*House Accommodation.* The number of houses is apparently sufficient for several have been vacant for the greater part of the year, this applies particularly to the shop property in the town. The cottage property has been well filled and the new ones which have been built quickly occupied. Four houses in

Foundry Street have been closed as unfit for habitation and six in Parkes Passage have been pulled down and the site they once occupied laid out as a garden—a very great improvement. There is unfortunately, still a great deal of house property in Stourport of the back-to-back type or houses without back doors or windows, in such houses it is impossible to get a proper supply of sunshine and fresh air, and every effort should be made to close or improve them. Such houses exist in Parkes Passage, Swan Passage, Lickhill Road, New Street, Bridge Street, High Street, Lombard Street, Foundry Street, Raven Street, Engine Lane, Mart Lane, Mitton, Gilgal, Severn Road, Lion Hill, Sion Gardens, Stour Lane, York Street, and Upper Mitton, in fact all over the district, the surroundings are generally damp, dirty, and illpaved, the houses themselves in poor repair. The back premises of many of the shops in High Street, Bridge Street, York Street, and Lombard Street are cramped and dark.

New houses have been built with out-buildings so close as to very considerably darken the living room of the family, and the privy midden and ash-pit so situated that when the wind blows in certain directions the air entering the house must become polluted. Houses of this very undesirable type may be seen in New Town, Vernon Road, and Camden Place. Those recently erected in Parkes Passage and Worcester Street on the contrary have every facility for the entry of sunshine and fresh air.

*Sewage and Drainage.* The present condition is practically the same as when the County Medical Officer reported to the County Council in 1893. Since that date various schemes of sewage disposal have been under the consideration of the Council, but, notwithstanding pressure on the part of the County Council, nothing definite has been decided. The present sewers are chiefly brick culverts, large and leaky, without manholes or inspection chambers, are inadequately ventilated, and discharge crude sewage into the rivers. There are no sewers in Newtown where leaky cesspits within 20 or 30 yards of the houses receive the sewage and rainwater. In wet weather these cesspits are liable to overflow and at all times the pumping of their contents on to the soil near the houses is an intolerable

nuisance. This pumping usually only takes place when the cesspits show signs of overflowing which is naturally after rain when the soil is already sodden and unfit to absorb the stinking liquid which is put on it.

Two large open drains which eventually discharge into the Stour exist in Mill Road.

*Excrement Disposal.* The privy midden system still prevails though probably about 50 water closets exist which empty directly or indirectly into the sewers. This disgusting method of excrement disposal cannot but be a nuisance especially in hot weather and complaints are frequently received from the householders along the line of route to the farm where the soil is deposited.

*Removal and disposal of house refuse.* This is regularly and systematically removed by the servants of the Council. The ash-pits are much too large and the calls not sufficiently frequent. The retention of decaying animal and vegetable matter often within a few feet of houses or public ways is not merely a nuisance but constitutes a distinct danger to the public. I regret to say that the refuse is still being deposited on Hartlebury Common and it is hard to understand why neither the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (the owners) or the Droitwich Rural Sanitary Authority take no steps to prevent this beautiful common being used as a dumping ground for the factory and house refuse of Stourport.

*Water Supply* The chief water supply of the district is received from the works of the Kidderminster Corporation and is remarkably good. There are still many wells whose contents must be liable to contamination.

*Slaughter-Houses.* These are in many cases too near to dwellings. They have been inspected and generally found clean. A public slaughter-house, where meat could be properly inspected before being offered for sale would be of benefit both to public and butchers.

*Bakehouses.* A few of these are light and roomy but several are dark and not well adapted for their purpose. They are generally kept fairly clean.

*Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.* Bye-laws modelled on those issued by the Local Government Board have been discussed and adopted, and will doubtless result in much needed improvements in these places.

*Nuisances.* Two or three have been mentioned earlier in the report. A very serious nuisance is caused by the stench from the Kidderminster Sewage Farm where raw sewage is deposited on land within a few hundred yards of Newtown, Burlish, and Camden Place. In summer time especially the nuisance is very great.

The subject of pig-styes has been discussed by the Council without result, though they are frequently very offensive and are allowed too near to wells, houses, and public roads.

The roads of Newtown and Upper Mitton have in wet weather been in a disgraceful condition for years, indeed Brindley Street is often little better than a quagmire.

The Tramway in many places projects dangerously above the level of the road, and has in one case at least been the cause of a serious accident.

The level crossing at the Railway Station is still a source of danger and delay to the public especially to the workpeople of Newtown hurrying to and from the factories.

*The Mortuary* is still insufficiently equipped.

*River Pollution* continues unabated.

*Bye-laws* modelled on those of the Local Government Board have been discussed but not adopted.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

E. S. ROBINSON.

**Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health, for 1900.**

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**Stourport Urban District.**

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Area in Acres, 1,165.

Population 1881,—4,191

„ 1891,—4,865

Increase or Decrease, 1881-1891—674

Estimated Population, 1900,—5,488.

Name of Medical Officer of Health.—

E. S. ROBINSON.

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**Mortality per 1,000 of Population living during same period.**

Birth Rate—22·2. Death Rate—10·2. Zymotic Death Rate—·36. Infant Mortality—98·3. Phthisis Death Rate—·72. Resp. Death Rate—18·2. Smallpox Death Rate—nil. Measles Death Rate—nil. Scarlatina Death Rate—nil Diphtheria and Membranous Croup Death Rate—nil. Whooping Cough Death Rate—nil. Fever Death Rate—·18. Diarrhoea Death Rate—·18. Enteritis Death Rate—·18. Cancer, Malignant Disease Death Rate—·36.

		Smallpox.	Measles.	Scarlatina.	Diphtheria.	Membranous Croup.	Fever.	Erysipelas.	Puerperal Fever.
Cases	...			17				2	2
Deaths	...								1
Hospital Cases	...								
Hospital Deaths	...			11					

*Diseases prevalent.*

*Period.*

Influenza ... ... January, February, and March.

Rotheen ... ... April and May.

Measles ... ... November and December.

*Schools closed*—In April.

*Ordered that the foregoing Report be printed for circulation.*

C. HUGH WATSON,

*Clerk to the Council.*

STOURPORT:

W. CANE, PRINTER AND STATIONER, HIGH STREET.

1901.

